

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

5 March 1984

Japan: Moving Toward a Security
Dialogue with Western Europe [redacted]

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Summary

Prime Minister Nakasone over the past year has made an unprecedented effort, using the INF issue as a springboard, to expand security relations with Western Europe. He has raised security cooperation frequently, both in presentations to domestic audiences and in discussions with the Europeans. At the same time, he has taken a strong stand to protect Japan's equities in the INF debate. [redacted]

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Background

Until the late 1970s, most Japanese viewed Western Europe in narrow economic terms. Security relations were almost non-existent, largely because of Japan's constitutional prohibition against collective defense and strong domestic opposition to involvement in foreign security problems. Although LDP defense activists believed Japan and Western Europe shared common security concerns and initiated some contacts, the Dietmen involved represented a relatively uninfluential minority in the party. [redacted]

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Interest in security consultations picked up with the Soviet

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invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. In our view, the invasion brought the Soviet threat into clearer focus in Japan

When the EC and NATO placed post-Afghan sanctions on the USSR, Tokyo adopted parallel policies. Similarly, in early 1981, after the imposition of martial law in Poland, the Suzuki government moved in tandem with the EC and NATO.

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Nakasone Uses INF

Since he took office in late 1982, Prime Minister Nakasone has been driving to expand Japanese-West European relations. In numerous speeches and interviews, both in Japan and abroad, he has emphasized that Japan must demonstrate its commitment to the West. In addition, we believe Nakasone is convinced that growing Soviet military power endangers Japanese interests and that Japan and Western Europe must work together to maintain a strong deterrent. The first defense white paper published since Nakasone took office explicitly defined the international order in terms of rival military alliances and placed Japan squarely with the West.

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Exploitation of the INF issue has been the centerpiece of Nakasone's strategy. Previous prime ministers--particularly Nakasone's immediate predecessor, Suzuki--chose to ignore the SS-20s being deployed in the eastern USSR, even though the number of launchers had risen to almost 100 by late 1982. In our view, Suzuki and other leaders of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) were reluctant to publicize the SS-20 buildup or focus on the INF talks because they believed doing so would encourage LDP defense activists to press for a bigger military budget and provide ammunition for the pacifist left to attack the government's security policy. Suzuki regarded US-Soviet INF negotiations as a matter to be resolved by the superpowers.

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Nakasone, on the other hand, has gone public with the INF debate. In January 1983 then General Secretary Andropov suggested that the Soviet Union, as part of an interim INF agreement, might respond to West European concerns by moving SS-20s east of the Urals, where they could serve as a counterweight to US weapons in Japan. Nakasone drew public attention to the direct Soviet military threat to Japan and also pointed out to his domestic audience that Japan's security could be affected by

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European policies. Because the notion of linking Japanese and West European security was alien to the public, he focused first on championing Japanese interests against a potential US or European bargain with the Soviets. He asserted that it would be unacceptable for the United States to negotiate an INF settlement that enhanced European at the expense of Asian--especially Japanese--security. His demand that Japan's friends pay special attention to its needs was in keeping with the approach normally taken by Japanese prime ministers and thus stirred little controversy at home. [REDACTED]

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While playing on national interests, Nakasone went on to take the highly unusual step of publicly declaring that, if Japan expected European cooperation, it would have to reciprocate.

-- During the Williamsburg Economic Summit in May 1983 he endorsed NATO's two-track approach to the INF talks in return for reassurances that any limitations negotiated on SS-20s would be global.

-- At Williamsburg he also supported the Political Statement, which emphasized the need for solidarity in the face of Soviet attempts to use the INF issue to foment discord within the Western alliance.

-- He returned to the same themes in November during his talks with visiting West German Chancellor Kohl and, according to Embassy officials, took the initiative in including these views in the Kohl-Nakasone "Tokyo Declaration," which he subsequently persuaded President Reagan to endorse. [REDACTED]

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Following Nakasone's lead, other government officials have spent substantial time discussing security issues with the West Europeans.

-- In early 1983, when NATO began planning for a study of the security implications of East-West economic relations, Tokyo not only pressed to be consulted before policy recommendations were formulated but requested that the venue be shifted from Washington to Brussels.

-- The first trip to Tokyo by the French Foreign Ministry's senior subcabinet official occurred in April 1983; according to Japanese officials, security issues, particularly INF--figured prominently in his discussions.

-- Later the same month, the senior British Foreign Office official responsible for defense problems traveled to Tokyo for the first annual consultations on security

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affairs; again, talks centered on INF. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

Despite such progress, limitations on increased security cooperation with Western Europe remain strong. The LDP's election setback in December may force Nakasone to pay closer attention to domestic issues in the coming months and to play a less forceful role in expanding Japan's cooperation with the Western security system.

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Nakasone probably will continue to push European countries to consider the impact of INF issues on Japanese national interests. In talks with the West Europeans--as well as with the United States--Japanese officials have suggested that an INF agreement should not include: a shift of SS-20s to the east, a reduction in Europe without at least some reduction in Asia (that is, no "freeze" in Asia), or an equalization of numbers of SS-20s deployed against Europe and Asia. If in future negotiations the West Europeans were to press for an INF agreement that appeared to benefit them at the expense of Japan, recent progress toward closer cooperation could come to a halt.

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